

WATER IS A RIGHT.



March 4, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: *SUPPORT for the Proposed Huntington Beach Seawater Desalination Project*

Dear Governor Newsom:

As a coalition of local business, labor, environmental justice and coastal habitat conservation leaders we are calling on your administration to ensure the proposed Huntington Beach Seawater Desalination Project (“Project”) is approved in April by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (“Water Board”).

Climate change is an undeniable threat to the health and safety of the Golden State and its diverse communities. As you have said, California’s “*dries are getting drier*” as the intensity of climate change worsens conditions exponentially by the year. Water quality, reliability, affordability and coastal habitat protection are essential for the communities we represent, and it is these communities who are feeling the brunt of climate change impacts more than ever.

Science, law, public opinion and public policy stand squarely on the side of the Project. There is broad support for desalination in Orange County and our state – regular surveys of registered voters demonstrate 70% support or higher. The Project will be 100% carbon neutral, provide Southern California with a drought-proof water supply that reduces the need to import water from Northern California, create thousands of jobs, millions in new tax revenues for local cities and schools and protect, restore and enhance valuable coastal habitat including saving the Bolsa Chica Wetlands - the largest restored coastal wetlands complex in Southern California.

Given your call for a climate-resilient water portfolio, to include seawater desalination, it is unfathomable that a state regulatory agency would deny the amendment and renewal of a permit that very same agency first granted to the Project fifteen years ago. The Regional Board staff has yet again found the Project complies with the state’s water quality regulations and has recommend the board renew the permit once again. Yet, these facts have not stopped climate change-denying seawater desalination opponents from stooping to low tactics like personally attacking state regulators and Project proponents like yourself.

This small group of special interests clearly want to stop housing, water and transportation infrastructure development all across our state instead of working to advance technologies and solutions which will protect us from the ravages of climate change.

You were right in 2017 when as Lt. Governor and Chairman of the State Lands Commission you voted to approve the Project. The next generation of Californians deserve the same opportunities to succeed as the last generation. This can only be accomplished through responsible infrastructure planning. The undersigned encourage your administration to ensure the Huntington Beach Seawater Desalination Project is approved so the next generation is given the tools they will need to combat climate change.

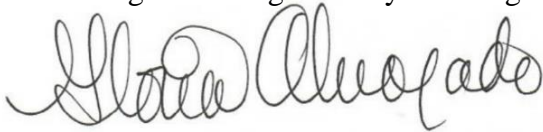
Sincerely,



Ron Miller,
Los Angeles-Orange County Building Trades



Ray Baca,
Engineering Contractors' Association



Gloria Alvarado,
Water Is A Right/Orange County Labor Federation



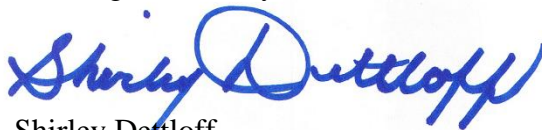
Carolyn Cavecche,
OCTAX



Tracy Hernandez,
Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed)



Tom Geller,
National Electrical Contractors Association



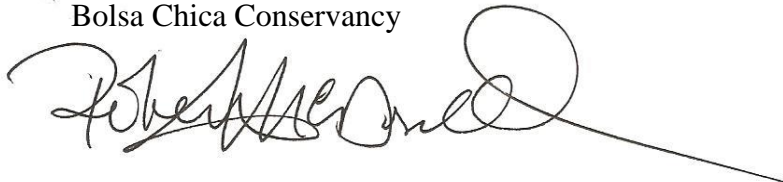
Shirley Dettloff,
Fmr. California Coastal Commissioner
Fmr. Huntington Beach Mayor



Bruce Channing,
Association of California City, Orange County



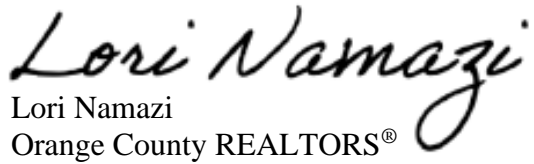
Patrick Brenden,
Bolsa Chica Conservancy



Bobby McDonald,
Black Chamber of Orange County



Jose Barrera,
League of United Latin American Citizens


Lori Namazi
Orange County REALTORS®



Steve LaMotte
Building Industry Association, Orange County


Barbara Thomas,
South Orange County Economic Coalition



Reuben D. Franco
Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

cc:

Ana Matosantos, Cabinet Secretary, Governor of California (ana.matosantos@gov.ca.gov)

Christine Hironaka, Deputy Cabinet Secretary (christine.hironaka@gov.ca.gov)

Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, CalEPA (jared.blumenfeld@calepa.ca.gov)

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary Natural Resources Agency (wade.crowfoot@gov.ca.gov)

E. Joaquin Esquivel, Chair, State Water Resources Control Board (joaquin.esquivel@waterboards.ca.gov)